

IN THE CLAIMS:

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1-12 (cancelled).

e 13. (currently amended) A method for operating a vehicle in which access authorization is determined via a dialogue between a control device fixed in the vehicle and an authorization verification device carried by a user, said authorization verification device also enabling a starting of the vehicle drive unit, wherein the control device interrogates said authorization verification device for the purpose of starting the vehicle drive unit separately and independently of the dialogue for establishing access ~~authorization~~.  
authorization; and

further wherein said interrogation also occurs during the operation of the vehicle drive unit.

14-16 (cancelled).

17. (currently amended) ~~The method according to claim 15,~~ A method for operating a vehicle in which access authorization is determined via a dialogue between a control device fixed in the vehicle and an authorization verification device carried by a user, said authorization verification device also enabling a starting of the vehicle drive unit, wherein the control device interrogates said authorization verification device for the purpose of starting the vehicle drive unit

separately and independently of the dialogue for establishing access authorization;

wherein said interrogation occurs during and/or after concluding the operation of the vehicle drive unit; and

wherein if an interrogation is unsuccessful after the start of the operation of the vehicle drive unit, the method mechanically unlocks a memory fixed in the control unit of the vehicle to provide an access authorization code.

21 18. (currently amended) ~~The method according to claim 16;~~ A method for operating a vehicle in which access authorization is determined via a dialogue between a control device fixed in the vehicle and an authorization verification device carried by a user, said authorization verification device also enabling a starting of the vehicle drive unit, wherein the control device interrogates said authorization verification device for the purpose of starting the vehicle drive unit separately and independently of the dialogue for establishing access authorization;

wherein said interrogation occurs during a start of the operation of the vehicle drive unit;

wherein the interrogation also occurs during and/or after concluding the operation of the vehicle drive unit; and

wherein if an interrogation is unsuccessful after the start of the operation of the vehicle drive unit, the method mechanically unlocks a memory fixed in the control unit of the vehicle to provide an access authorization code.

19. (previously added) The method according to claim 17, further comprising the act conspicuously informing the user of the mechanical unlocking of the vehicle-fixed memory.

20. (previously added) The method according to claim 18, further comprising the act conspicuously informing the user of the mechanical unlocking of the vehicle-fixed memory.

21. (previously added) The method according to claim 19, wherein the act of conspicuously informing provides a visual and/or acoustical signal.

22. (previously added) The method according to claim 20, wherein the act of conspicuously informing provides a visual and/or acoustical signal.

23. (previously added) The method according to claim 19, further comprising the act of ejecting said vehicle-fixed memory from a storage location when the vehicle drive unit is switched-off.

24. (previously added) The method according to claim 21, further comprising the act of ejecting said vehicle-fixed memory from a storage location when the vehicle drive unit is switched-off.

25. (previously added) A system for carrying out a method of operating a vehicle, in which access authorization is determined in a dialogue between a control device, fixed in the vehicle, and an authorization verification device carried by a user, said authorization verification device also being used for starting a vehicle drive unit, wherein said authorization verification device is interrogated for the purpose of starting the vehicle drive unit independently of said dialogue for establishing access authorization, said system comprising:

an activating unit for the vehicle drive unit, said activating unit starting the vehicle drive unit; and

a vehicle-fixed memory forming a part of said activating unit for the vehicle drive unit, said vehicle-fixed memory being mechanically unlocked from the activating unit if an interrogation of said authorization verification device is unsuccessful after starting the vehicle drive unit.

26. (previously added) The system according to claim 25, wherein said vehicle-fixed memory fits into the activating unit.

27. (previously added) The system according to claim 25, wherein said vehicle-fixed memory fits into said authorization verification device.

28. (previously added) The system according to claim 26, wherein said vehicle-fixed memory fits into said authorization verification device.

29. (previously added) The system according to claim 25, wherein an access verification authorization code is extracted from said vehicle-fixed memory.

30. (previously added) The system according to claim 25, wherein said vehicle-fixed memory and a mechanical key form a constructional unit that is fit into said activating unit for the vehicle drive unit.

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(Applicants' remarks are set forth herein below starting on the following page).